

MY FAVORITE CIRCUS MUSIC COMPOSER

By Larry Johnson, WJU #3909

When the topic of circus music composers comes up, often the first names mentioned are Karl King and Henry Fillmore.

Now there is no debating that King's compositions are top-quality works for band, and they deserve their place in any pantheon of great band compositions. And, certainly, his famous *Barnum & Bailey's Favorite* tops the list of favorite circus tunes by a U.S. composer. But Karl's compositional skills permeate all of his works. He was far more than a composer of music for circus acts. A perusal of his catalog will reveal that less than half of King's output was intended for circus use.

Then there is Henry Fillmore. He, like Karl King, wrote many, many pieces that were not circus tunes. But the ones he did write were first-rate in every way, as anyone who has ever played the likes of *Rolling Thunder* and *Circus Bee* knows. Maybe it is because he was a trombonist that his trombone novelties have become the definitive works for their genre. These pieces, like *Lassus Trombone*, for example, are so synonymous with the circus that no program of circus music is complete without one. However, Fillmore, like Karl King, was not primarily a circus music writer.

The person topping my favorite circus composers list may or may not surprise you, however. I rate **Fred Jewell** as the champion of circus music. Jewell was primarily a circus music composer. Yes, he did write a few other tunes, sometimes under the J.E. Wells pseudonym, but can anyone name them? Also, the quality of the music by Jewell is quite high... first rate in my opinion.

Then there is the indefinable matter of "flavor." Karl King did have an in-born sense of the essence of circus music and he innately wrote that quality into many of his works, including those not intended for the circus. That is why so many of his tunes sound like circus music, and were later played as such, even though they were not originally intended for that purpose. Fred Jewell, on the other hand, deliberately wrote for the circus. His music was so completely "flavored" for circus tastes that it generally does not work nearly as well when played in other venues. Indeed, Jewell was a pure circus music composer.

As both a player and then bandmaster of the band for the Gainesville Community Circus in the 1950s and early 1960s, I have had the personal thrill of traveling down the sawdust trail. I have played, and later conducted, circus music both under a Big Top and in large outdoor venues. I know the smell of sawdust (and, okay, also that distinctive unpleasant odor horses leave behind.) Further, I know what music best depicts this environment because I have been in it.

So, my vote goes to Fred Jewell as my favorite circus music composer because his works so perfectly fit the activity of a circus performance under the Big Top. I would also rank Will Huff quite high as well. They were both pure circus composers who wrote little else. For those of you used to playing music in auditoriums, you might have a different opinion. However, if you have experienced the real thing ... that is, under canvas with three rings of action ... perhaps you would agree with me.

FRED JEWELL MARCHES

The American Leader
American Legionnaires
Baby Boo March
Banner Bearer March
Battle Royal March
Booster Boys March
Boy Scouts March
Cadet Days March
Call of the Road March
El Campo March
Carnival Queen March
Cavaletta March
Checked Flag March
Circusdom March
Coast Defenders March
Collegian March
Counterpoint March
Crawley's March
Denver Post March
Director General March
E Pluribus Unum March
Easy Walker March

Explorer March
Fighting Spirit March
Floto's Triumph March
Freshman March
Fritz March
Gentry's Triumphal March
Globe Trotter March
Good Sports March
The Great Admiral March
Guy March
Hail to Old Glory March
Here Comes the Band March
High and Mighty March
The Huston March Imperial Council March
In the Lead March
Intercolonial March
Iowa Brigade Band March
Jacques de Molai March
Jolly Rover March
Junior High March
The Kick Off March
Last Call , funeral march
Legion of Honor March
Little Traveler March

March to Mecca
March of the Prophets
El Merito March
Murat Temple Band March
The New Arrival March
New Friendship March
Officer of the Guard March
Old Circus Band March
Old Home Guards March
Old Scout March
Old Timer March
On Dress Parade March
On the Air March
On the Firing Line March
Our Favorite March
Our Mascot March
Our Special March
Our Yell Leader March
The Outlook March
Over the Goal March
Pageant of Progress March
Pass it Along March
Path of Honor March
Pride and Glory March
Progressive American March

The Pumpkin Center
Cornet Band March
Quality-Plus March
Radio Waves March
The Request March
Sahara Grotto Band March
School Colors March
Scoutmaster March
The Screamer March
Shrine of Liberty March
Sophomore March
Spirit of School March
Supreme Triumph March
Team Work March
Tecumseh March
Through the Line March
Tramp March
Triumph of Victory March
Trooping the Colors March
The Undertow March
Vim and Vigor March
Watch Your Step March
The Westerner March
Yorksonian March
Yours Truly March

FRED JEWELL OVERTURES

Cloth of Gold Overture
Revelry Overture
Scarlet King Overture
Spick and Span Overture
Sunshine Overture

GALOPS

Galop - Go!
Magnet Galop
Skidoo Galop
They're Off Galop
Whirlwind Galop

WALTZES

Crimson Petal Waltz
La Linea Waltz
Myrtle Waltz
Roseland Waltz
Roses of Memory Waltz

OTHER WORKS

Airy Fairy, caprice
Always
At Break of Dawn
At Evening Time
First Time Rag
Lawzy Massey
Minnie Ho Ho
Passing Fancy
Romance Land
Rosemary, Cuban dance
Sabbath Morn
Some Band Rag
Trombone Blues
Trombone Smiles
Young Love

In addition, 9 marches, 4
overtures and 1 waltz were
published under Jewell's
J.E. Wells pseudonym.

JEWELL, FRED (1875-1936)

By Charles P. Conrad, WJU #1525

Frederick Alton Jewell was born on May 28, 1875, in Worthington, a small southern Indiana town, the sixth of seven children. He took his first music lessons from his father, Aden, who was a singing teacher, piano repairman, and circuit-rider preacher. A traveling minstrel show had gone bankrupt and had sold their instruments to Aden, and he started a family band. The band performed at such events as political rallies for presidential candidate Benjamin Harrison. Fred played tenor horn but soon found the baritone to be his favorite instrument. He also played clarinet, violin, cornet, calliope, and trombone professionally.

He left high school during his junior year, running away to nearby Bloomington and joining the Gentry Brothers Dog and Pony Show. He played baritone and trombone with that show and then with the Wallace Circus (beginning in 1891). From 1899-1901, he was band director with Gentry. From 1902-1904, he played baritone with the Ringling Brothers Circus, and from 1905-1906 he played baritone and calliope with the Great Floto Circus [renamed Sells-Floto in 1906]. He joined the Barnum and Bailey Circus in 1907 as baritone player and assistant director and was director from 1908-1910.

Jewell then left the circus business and returned to Worthington, marrying in 1912 and opening a clothing business in 1913. The call of the road was too strong, however; he became music director of the Starnes-Lawrence Dramatic Company and toured for three years. From 1916-1917, he toured with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus as band director.

In 1919, he moved to Oskaloosa, Iowa, and his friend and publisher Charles Barnhouse hired him to direct the Iowa Brigade Band. He directed this band until 1923 and then returned to Worthington. The Fred Jewell Publishing Company was established there in 1920. He used the pseudonym J.E. Wells for some of his easier pieces.

Jewell became president of the Worthington Town Council, was the first band director at the local high school, and also assumed leadership of the Murat Temple and Sahara Grotto Bands in Indianapolis. He took his Shrine band to national conferences, befriending such famous bandmasters as Henry Fillmore. In 1928, he led the Tampa [Florida] Municipal Band.

Jewell was elected to the American Bandmasters Association in 1932.

Fred Jewell died on February 11, 1936, in Worthington, Indiana.

WINDJAMMERS MEMBERSHIP

Windjammers membership is open to all of those interested in the preservation, education and performance of traditional American circus music. We welcome playing and non-playing members alike. Membership Dues are for the period January 1 through December 31 and are pro-rated quarterly for new members joining after March 31st. Current annual dues are \$10 for Youth members (18 years old and younger), \$40 for Individuals over 18, and \$47 for a Family membership of two members residing at the same mailing address. Optional Tax-Deductible Donations are welcomed. Our Membership Application and additional information can be found on our website.

RENEW or JOIN ONLINE at mywju.org

Share your enthusiasm for traditional circus music with others and encourage them to join Windjammers Unlimited. Our 50th Anniversary Special: 50% off the annual dues for new members signing up between October 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. Those Memberships will run through December 31, 2021.